

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 14144 242104Z
ACTION SCS-05

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4467

UNCLAS MEXICO 14144

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CDES (BECKWITH, GARY MITCHELL) MX
SUBJECT: DEATH CHIAPAS JUNGLE

REF: MEXICO 13821

1. AFTER RECEIVING INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR THE VARIOUS OFFICIALS IN CHIAPAS, MR. JIM CHARLES OLSEN RETURNED TO TUXLA GUTIERREZ WHERE HE MADE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE STATE OF CHIAPAS. HE WAS THEN FLOWN TO THE BURIAL SITE IN A MEXICAN GOVERNMENT PLANE ACCOMPANIED BY THE APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

2. UPON ARRIVAL, THE GROUP WAS MET BY A COMMITTEE OF LOCAL CITIZENS WHO INSISTED THAT THEY COULD NOT PERMIT THE EXHUMATION OF THE REMAINS "BECAUSE OF THE DANGER OF AN EPIDEMIC." AFTER CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION, IT WAS DECIDED (GIVEN THE BACKGROUND DISCUSSED PARA FOUR BELOW) THAT IT WOULD BE BEST TO RETURN TO TUXLA GUTIERREZ FOR EITHER INSTRUCTIONS OR REINFORCEMENTS.

3. MR. OLSEN THEN RETURNED TO MEXICO CITY TO MEET WITH MR. AND MRS. WENDELL BECKWITH AND EMBASSY OFFICERS TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION. MR. OLSEN EXPRESSED HIS OPINION THAT ALTHOUGH HEALTH REASONS WERE CITED BY THE LOCAL CITIZENS AS THE REASON THEY COULD NOT PERMIT EXHUMATION, IT WAS CLEAR THAT OTHER LOCAL POLITICAL AND CULTURAL
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CONFLICTS WERE INVOLVED.

4. HIS VIEW WAS SUBSTANTIATED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE STATE OF CHIAPAS, WHO REQUESTED THE EMBASSY ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF CHIAPAS TO ACCEPT HIS APOLOGIES. HE STATED THAT IT WOULD PRESENTLY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO EXHUME THE REMAINS WITHOUT A CONFRONTATION

WITH THE VILLAGERS, AND THIS MIGHT WELL LEAD TO BLOODSHED. HE NOTED THAT IT WAS IN THIS SAME AREA THAT SEVEN POLICE OFFICERS WERE RECENTLY KILLED, AND THAT THE AREA HAS A HISTORY OF CONFLICT.

5. ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO CLEARLY EVALUATE THE SITUATION FROM MEXICO CITY IT APPEARS THAT THE SUPERSTITIONS OF THE LOCAL INDIAN POPULATION ARE BEING MANIPULATED BY LOCAL POLITICIANS WHO WISH TO MAINTAIN CONTROL AND HAVE STRONG ANTI-GOVERNMENT LEANINGS. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT THE AUTHORITIES HAVE HONESTLY TRIED TO ASSIST, AND FAMILY HAS STATED THAT THEY DO NOT WISH TO FORCE A SITUATION WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO VIOLENCE. EMBASSY HAS ASKED FOR ESTIMATE AS TO WHEN IT MIGHT BE AGAIN FEASIBLE TO SEEK TO MOVE THE REMAINS, BUT AS YET HAS NOT RECEIVED A REPLY. FAMILY HAS ARRANGED FOR FINAL BURIAL IN MEXICO CITY. THOMPSON

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